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Members of the Illinois congressional delegation continued lobbying against a proposed federal train horn rule this week as the deadline for comment on the rule expired.

The Federal Railroad Administration's "interim final rule," sets standards for municipalities to establish quiet zones around some railroad crossings. The rule may be adopted in December, and has raised concern among municipal, state and federal officials due to the costs involved, questions about accuracy of the data used to determine which areas would be affected and regulations that many believe are too stringent.

U.S Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, was one of 15 members of the Illinois delegation that sent a letter to FRA Chairman Alan Rutter Monday urging him to reevaluate the interim final rule on the use of train horns at railway grade crossings.

"We cannot burden local taxpayers with millions of dollars in costs to comply with a poorly drafted new federal rule," Kirk said. "We must defend the quiet zones of local communities and help them upgrade safety equipment."

Kirk has said alternate regulations are needed in Illinois due to the number of grade crossings, and he supports a proposal to allow the Illinois Commerce Commission to establish safety thresholds and guidelines for quiet zones in Illinois with oversight from the FRA.

Kirk has said a preliminary federal report lists 50 suburbs whose quiet zones do not meet proposed standards to keep horn bans in place.

The letter sent to Rutter says that the proposed rule threatens progress on the issue already made in Illinois, and amounts to an "unfunded mandate on local communities and the state who will have to divert large portions of their resources to upgrade already safe crossings in order to maintain their quiet zones."